Research Notes: for John Arthur Laughlin (1910 - 1953)

Research Overview:

John Arthur Laughlin was born in 1910 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, into a family that moved frequently and lived in crowded households that included relatives. Records place his childhood in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. By 1920, he was living in Elkhart, Indiana, in a household that included parents, siblings, an uncle, and non-relatives.

His father died in December 1923, when John was a teenager, a loss that reshaped the family. The records that follow are sparse about how John and his siblings were supported after that point, but census entries show John marrying and working young and appearing early as a wage-earning adult in households that included other family members.

Although he was one of several men in his direct line named John Arthur Laughlin, he did not use a generational suffix and appears in records simply as John A. Laughlin. He married Gertrude Healy in 1929, and two daughters were born during their marriage. Census records show households that relied on steady work, shared space, and the presence of extended family.

After Gertrude died in 1948, John remarried the following year. The 1950 census places him in Chicago as a policeman, living with his second wife, daughter, step-son, and mother-in-law. As before, the records point to a household formed quickly after loss, drawing together young people who were still grieving and adjusting, and placing strain on everyone involved.

John Arthur Laughlin died in Chicago in 1953 at the age of forty-three. His obituary emphasizes the roles—husband, father, son, brother—without reference to occupation or achievement. Taken together, the records show a life shaped by ongoing strain and responsibility, and by the quiet endurance of the family members who lived alongside him.

Speculative Narrative:

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Timeline:

10 Feb 1910 - Birth at Pittsburgh, Allegheny, Pennsylvania.[1]

He never went by John Laughlin III. I have done that because three, possibly four, direct ancestors were named John Arthur Laughlin.

22 Mar 1915 - Birth of sister Mary Elizabeth Laughlin (1915 - 1997) at Cleveland, Cuyahoga, Ohio.[2]

15 Feb 1919 - Birth and death of sister Margaret Laughlin (1919 - 1919) in Indiana.[3]

Her birth certificate says "live birth." Margaret may have lived for a day and could be buried at Elkhart or in Clinton, Iowa, near her father.

1920 - US Census in Elkhart, Elkhart, Indiana.[4]

John Arthur Laughlin, 44, head, born in Iowa, parents born in Iowa, assistant general storekeeper

Gertrude Laughlin, 39, wife, born in Iowa, parents born in Ireland

Helen Laughlin, 10, daughter, born in Pennsylvania

John Laughlin, 8, son, born in Pennsylvania

[1] Pennsylvania, Department of Health, Certificate of Birth, Certificate 027034 - 1911, John Arthur Laughlin, Jr., born 10 February 1911, in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County.

[2] Ohio Birth Certificate # 18479 - 3950

[3] Indiana, US Birth Certificates, 1907 - 1944 for Margaret Laughlin Certificate 5886, Roll 45385_5395921, Volume 8 - 14

[4] 1920 U.S. Federal Census (Population Schedule), Ward 3, Elkhart, Elkhart County, Indiana, ED 50, Sheet 2B, Dwelling 41, Family 66, John Arthur Laughlin household; digital image, "1920 United States Federal Census," Ancestry.

Mary Elizabeth Laughlin, 4, daughter, born in Ohio

Madaline Laughlin, 2, daughter, born in Indiana

William F. Laughlin, 36, brother, born in Iowa, railroad brakeman, divorced

Thelma Maloney, 19

23 Dec 1923 - Death of father John Laughlin (1875 - 1923) at Chicago, Cook, Illinois. [5]

9 Nov 1929 - Marriage to Gertrude Healy at South Bend, Joseph, Indiana.[6]

Witnesses: Lloyd H Mayberry and Helen Laughlin Mayberry.

1930 - U.S. Census, at Chicago, Cook, Illinois.[7]

John A Laughlin - head, rents, worth x, has a radio, male, age 20, born Pennsylvania, parents born Iowa, chauffer

Gertrude Laughlin - wife, female, white, married, first at age 20, born in Illinois, parents born in Ireland

Gertrude Laughlin - mother, female, white, age 50, widow, born Iowa, parents born in Ireland

Madalane Laughlin - sister, female, white, age 12, single, born Indiana, parents born in Iowa

[5] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVV3-XFPH: 24 May 2022), John Arthur Laughlin, ; Burial, Clinton, Clinton, Iowa, United States of America, Saint Mary's Cemetery; citing record ID 6338810, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

[6] St. Joseph County (Indiana) Circuit Court, Marriage License Applications, Application No. 3760, John Arthur Laughlin Jun. to Gertrude F. Healy, license dated 5 November 1929; St. Joseph County Circuit Court, South Bend, Indiana.

[7] 1930 U.S. Federal Census (Population Schedule), Chicago, Cook, Illinois, ED 1339, Sheet 10A, Dwelling 78, Family 162, John Arthur Laughlin household; digital image, "1930 United States Federal Census," Ancestry.

31 Oct 1930 - Birth of daughter Patricia Ann Laughlin (1930 - 1996) at Chicago, Cook, Illinois.[8]

14 Mar 1935 - Birth of daughter Dolores Joan Laughlin (1935 -2010) at Chicago, Cook, Illinois.[9]

1940 - U.S. Census, at Chicago, Cook, Illinois.[10]

John A Laughlin, 29, head, living on 4042 Addison Street, born in Pennsylvania, chauffer

Gertrude F Laughlin, 30, wife, born in Illinois, highest education 4th year of high school

Patricia A Laughlin - 9, daughter, born in Illinois, 3rd grade

Deloris J Laughlin - 5, daughter, born in Illinois

16 Oct 1940 - Military World War II Draft Registration at Chicago, Cook, Illinois .[11]

13 Jul 1948 - Death of wife Gertrude Healy (1910 - 1948) at Chicago, Cook, Illinois .[12]

[8] Cook County, Illinois Birth Index, 1916-1935, file no: 6048554, Patricia Laughlin, born 31 October 1930.

[9] Cook County (Illinois) County Clerk, Certificate of Birth, No. 10618, Dolores Laughlin, born 14 March 1935.

[10] 1940 U.S. Federal Census (Population Schedule), Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, ED 103 2474, Sheet 7B, Dwelling 193, John A Laughlin household; digital image, "1940 United States Federal Census," Ancestry.

[11] United States, Selective Service System, Selective Service Registration Cards, World War II, Illinois, Cook County, Local Board 138, Serial Number 2086, John Arthur Laughlin, born 10 February 1911; digital image, "U.S., World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942." Ancestry.

[12] Illinois, Department of Public Health, Certificate of Death, Certificate 26998, Gertrude Frances Laughlin, died 13 July 1948, in Evanston, Cook County.

24 Aug 1949 - Marriage to Virginia Willing (1910 - 1996) Chicago, Cook, Illinois .[13] St. Stephens Catholic Church - Rev J V Hoffman.

1950 - U.S. Census, at Chicago, Cook, Illinois.[14]

John A. Laughlin - head, white, male, 39, married, born Pennsylvania, worked last week as a policeman,

Virginia A Laughlin - wife, white, female, 38, married, born Wisconsin

Dolores J Laughlin - daughter, white, female, 15, single, born Illinois

Jere Laughlin - step son, white, male, 18, single, born Illinois

Alice Willing - mother-in-law, white, female, 72, widow, born Wisconsin?

18 Jul 1953 - Death at Chicago, Cook, Illinois. .[15]

Jul 1953 - Obituary at Chicago, Cook, Illinois. .[16]

"John A. Laughlin of 2209 Rosemont Avenue, beloved husband of Virginia Willing Laughlin, loving father of Patricia and Dolores, son of Gertrude Sheppard Laughlin, brother of Helen Langhoff, Mary Brandt, and Madelyn

[13] Cook County (Illinois) County Clerk, Marriage License and Certification, No. 2098669, John A. Laughlin to Miss Virginia A. Willing, married 27 August 1949.

[14] 1950 U.S. Federal Census (Population Schedule), Chicago, Cook County, Illinois, ED 103 - 5026, Sheet 75, Dwelling 90, John A. Laughlin household; digital image, "1950 United States Federal Census," Ancestry.

[15] "Laughlin," obituary Chicago Daily Tribune, Chicago, Illinois, 21 July 1953, p. 12; digital image, "Historical Newspapers," ProQuest. Cook County, Illinois Death Index, 1908 - 1988, John A Laughlin, died 19 July 1953.

[17] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVVV-67LW: 24 February 2022), John Arthur Laughlin, ; Burial, Des Plaines, Cook, Illinois, United States of America, All Saints Catholic Cemetery and Mausoleum; citing record ID 23398308, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

[16] "Laughlin," obituary Chicago Daily Tribune, Chicago, Illinois, 21 July 1953, p. 12; digital image, "Historical Newspapers," ProQuest. Cook County, Illinois Death Index, 1908 - 1988, John A Laughlin, died 19 July 1953.

[17] "Find a Grave Index," database, *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVVV-67LW: 24 February 2022), John Arthur Laughlin, ; Burial, Des Plaines, Cook, Illinois, United States of America, All Saints Catholic Cemetery and Mausoleum; citing record ID 23398308, *Find a Grave*, http://www.findagrave.com.

Trestick. Funeral Wednesday, July 22, 9:30 am at funeral home 1359 Devon Avenue at Glenwood. Interment All Saints Cemetery. ROgers Park 4 - 1917 Chicago Tribune".

Jul - Burial at All Saints Cemetery at Des Plaines, Cook, Illinois.[17]